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Security Council

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Thursday, 11 October 2018, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mrs. Cordova Soria	(Bolivia (Plurinational State of))
Members:	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
	Equatorial Guinea	Ms. Edjang Mangue
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	Sweden	Mr. Orrenius Skau
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

Security Council mission

Briefing by Security Council mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (5 to 7 October 2018)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council mission

Briefing by Security Council mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (5 to 7 October 2018)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

At this meeting, the Security Council shall hear briefings by the co-leads of the Security Council mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 5 to 7 October, that is, the representatives of France, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Equatorial Guinea.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Delattre.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset, on behalf of us all, to warmly thank all the Secretariat staff who worked, in New York and in the field, to organize and successfully carry out our visit. I would refer first, of course, to the personnel of the Security Council Affairs Division, with a special word of thanks to Claudia Banz and her team, in particular Kerstin Bihlmaier. I am also thinking of the teams deployed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) — with special gratitude to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Leila Zerrougui — the Resident Coordinator, the interpreters and the security officers. The work of all these teams was exemplary and played a critical role in ensuring the success of the visit from 5 to 7 October. We are deeply grateful to them all. We wish to continue working with the Secretariat to draw every possible lesson from the mission.

I would also like to sincerely thank Bolivia and Equatorial Guinea, with which we have formed a close team to lead the visit, as well as all the rest of my colleagues. The following statement is a joint statement from the co-organizers of the visit. We will each report on a particular component of the mission.

The Security Council went to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to discuss the current political situation with the political stakeholders of the nation, in the context of electoral preparations, as well as humanitarian and security issues, in particular the protection of civilians and the reform of MONUSCO. I will focus my remarks on the political aspect.

In Kinshasa, the Security Council met with a large number of actors, including the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister, representatives of the Majorité présidentielle and the opposition, and a group of women candidates. We were also able to talk with the Independent National Electoral Commission, the Conférence épiscopale nationale du Congo (CENCO), and representatives of human rights movements and humanitarian associations. In addition, we had very useful and deep discussions with the MONUSCO leadership, which I again warmly thank.

With respect to the political aspect, on which I shall focus, the mission allowed us to send a key message. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is at a pivotal moment in its history. For the first time, a peaceful transmission of power following elections is possible, paving the way for the consolidation of stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the establishment of conditions conducive to its development. That is a real cause for hope, but its achievement requires all the political forces of the country to come together to meet the wishes of the Congolese people.

The Security Council came to Kinshasa to accompany the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the road to peace, stability and prosperity through the elections of 23 December. The holding of free, credible, transparent and peaceful elections on that date is expected by all. Dialogue remains the only way to overcome the remaining differences. The Security Council was reassured by the commitment of all its interlocutors to participate in the elections of 23 December. They all indicated their readiness to pursue the discussions.

The Security Council welcomed the progress made in the preparations for the elections. At the same time, the visit allowed us to convey the importance of taking additional steps to create confidence and establish conditions conducive to the widest possible consensus on the political and technical organization of elections. It is now up to all the political forces to ensure that

the country remains on the path to peace and the strengthening of its democratic institutions.

The Security Council also encouraged the parties to fully implement the agreement of 31 December 2016, in particular the de-escalation measures. The Council called for the process to be accompanied by a free and constructive political debate in which freedom of opinion and assembly and equitable access to the media are guaranteed and fundamental freedoms respected. The Security Council welcomed the successful holding of the opposition meeting on 29 September and in that regard called on the Congolese authorities to lift the ban on demonstrations forthwith.

The Security Council met with women representatives of civil society and women candidates in the presidential and legislative elections. Discussions focused on both the security and the humanitarian situation and on the elections, in particular the issue of women's participation at all levels of the peace and security decision-making process, including security, economic and social structures, which, in their current state, prevent many women from participating in elections. The Council encouraged the Government and other parties to redouble their efforts to strengthen women's political participation in electoral and political processes and in civil society.

Lastly, the Security Council announced, in full respect for the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in a constructive spirit of support for the country, the readiness of MONUSCO to provide logistical and technical assistance to the elections, if the need should arise.

That is the message that all 15 Council members shared with all the political actors we met. Compromises will be needed on both sides, and we hope that the political leaders' spirit of responsibility will prevail.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ambassador Delattre for his briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

At the outset, I join the Permanent Representative of France in thanking all those who contributed to the organization of the mission and to all colleagues who participated in the visit.

(*spoke in English*)

On the humanitarian situation, the Council remains attentive to the situation of the civilian population in the country. Everything must be done to protect them. After having heard all the different interlocutors, the Security Council remains concerned about the security and humanitarian situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, given the ceaseless violence in some parts of the country, in particular Ituri, North and South Kivu, and the Kasaïs, which includes disputes over natural resources, clashes among armed groups and between communities, and inter-ethnic violence.

The Security Council condemned all acts to exacerbate tensions and incite violence, and all acts of sexual exploitation and sexual violence. We called on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to investigate all such allegations, including those reported to involve the possible participation of the national police or the armed forces, and urged the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to hold accountable any actor responsible for violations of international humanitarian law or violations and abuses of human rights, as applicable, in particular those that may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The Security Council further condemned the persistence of such violence and the impact of armed groups in various parts of the country, as they are primarily responsible for the deterioration of the humanitarian situation. That is why the Security Council encouraged the Democratic Republic of the Congo to take further action, in accordance with national and international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as applicable, and with the support of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in accordance with its mandate to end the threat posed by armed groups, especially the Allied Democratic Forces.

As a result of this deplorable humanitarian crisis, the budget for the humanitarian response plan has doubled. In that regard, the Security Council welcomed the cooperation of the international community and other international partners in raising funds to meet humanitarian needs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We called on them to pursue such efforts, in continued cooperation with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in strict respect

for its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, and we further called on all parties to the conflict to ensure unrestricted access for humanitarian assistance.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to Ambassador Edjang Mangue.

Ms. Edjang Mague (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): Equatorial Guinea joins Bolivia and France in thanking the co-organizers and our colleagues who participated in the visit and did such high-quality work.

The Security Council had an opportunity to speak with the staff of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and to assess their ability to implement their mandate in accordance with resolution 2409 (2018), and in particular to respond to current and current security threats. In its meetings, the Security Council supported and praised the work of MONUSCO military and civilian personnel and the staff of the humanitarian agencies, who, despite the climate of insecurity and violence caused by armed groups, risk their lives daily to alleviate the suffering of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

With respect to to the humanitarian situation, the Security Council encouraged MONUSCO and the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo to work together in a coordinated manner against the threats posed by the armed groups in the country. We had an opportunity to see that the Mission has made significant efforts to improve its efficiency and performance, adapt to new challenges and be more robust and flexible. That was the main subject of the Council's discussions with the MONUSCO leadership. The Council reiterated its full confidence in, and support for, MONUSCO in this adaptation phase.

Finally, the Security Council expressed its solidarity with the victims of the Ebola outbreak and congratulated the Congolese authorities, the international community, MONUSCO and the World Health Organization on their speedy response to the health crisis. The Council also called for the immediate cessation of hostilities by all armed groups so as to combat and mitigate the spread of the disease.

I conclude by thanking the Government and the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for their hospitality and cordial treatment. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to have visited that beautiful country.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ambassador Edjang Mangue for her briefing.

I should like once again to thank all the members of the Security Council and the Secretariat staff who participated in the mission for the way in which they fulfilled their important responsibilities.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.